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A "Broadening Option" for the Marine Corps' 8412 Career Recruiters

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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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Executive Summary

Title: The Broadening Option for our 8412 Career Recruiters

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Thesis: A program in the form of a “broadening option” can be created to benefit the Marine Corps recruiting effort, the 8412 Career Recruiter, and deploying units in the operating forces in the form of a Career Recruiter Broadening Option in order to afford the opportunity to 8412 Career Recruiters the ability to contribute valuable and needed service on combat deployment.

Discussion: Until 1992, MOS 8412 Career Recruiters had the opportunity of a re-greening tour that removed them from the monthly recruiting mission cycle and got them re-acclimated with the Fleet Marine Force for a year. Currently, the only resemblance of a re-greening tour that exists is for an 8412 SNCO to attend a PME course on a major Marine base. At the present time, the U.S. is in its ninth year of conflict during the long war in Afghanistan. With the irregular threats and counterinsurgency strategy for Afghanistan, local engagement by U.S. personnel is extremely high on the list of priority tasks to be accomplished. Key Leader Engagement (KLE) and outstanding communication in a face to face fashion are extremely important actions in the high context society of Afghanistan. At issue is the fact that most Marines are not properly trained in the skill set that is needed. The 8412 Career Recruiter is a master of KLE, those very skills valued in the counterinsurgency fight occurring in Afghanistan. In order to become an 8412 a Marine must have shown mastery of those very skills and is the expert at the sustainment and training continuum required to develop and maintain them as a trainer and continuing practitioner of them on recruiting duty. In keeping with the Commandant of the Marine Corps’ intent to “get every Marine to the fight”, the masters of community engagement and communication can embark on an 18 to 24 month re-greening tour that enable them to; expand their leadership education, join the common bond of today’s Marines of having a deployment to a combat zone, become up to date with the changes in the operational forces and most importantly contribute their exceptionally valuable skills to winning the fight in the long war.

Conclusion: The conditions are set: it is time for the Marine Corps to bring all its force multipliers to bear that are experts in their field to win the long war in Afghanistan. There is a viable program to provide an 8412 Career Recruiter a re-greening tour that will both enhance his skills for the recruiting effort and provide the MAGTF a force multiplier at the same time. Deploy 8412s as Civil Affairs Marines to be the communication and engagement experts which provide the best force multiplier to our operational commanders for their best chance of success in Afghanistan.

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Preface

The genesis of this paper came from two exceptionally different experiences as a Marine. When reflected upon, Marines from those two experiences could combine forces and skills to become stronger and more successful. The first insights came from observing a Battalion and a Regimental Commander conduct numerous face to face key leader engagements with Iraqi officials in their areas of responsibility in and around Fallujah, Iraq in 2006. The second insights came from serving as the Commanding Officer of Recruiting Station Los Angeles from 2007 to 2009 witnessing warriors of Marine Corps Recruiting Command recruit the increase of 16,000 additional Marines to meet the Marine Corps' new strength level of 202,000 Marines. I am very appreciative of the guidance and assistance provided to me by my mentor, Dr. J. W. Gordon. Additionally I greatly appreciate the support provided to me by a few outstanding Marines at Marine Corps Recruiting Command and the Civil Military Operations branch of the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Education Training Center (SCETC).

A Broadening Option for our Career Recruiters

When they join the Corps, Marines expect to train, deploy, and fight. That's who we are; that's what we do; and we must allow every Marine that opportunity. I want our Corps' leadership to initiate policies to ensure all Marines, first termers and career Marines alike, are provided the ability to deploy to a combat zone.¹

The above statements are located in ALMAR 002/07, "Every Marine into the Fight-Commandant's Intent," signed January 23, 2007. The Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) delivered the message to the Corps following his learning that over one third of all Marines had yet to deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan, while the majority of the Corps had one or more deployments in the long war. The "Career Recruiter Broadening Option" benefits the Marine Corps recruiting effort, the military occupation specialty (MOS) of 8412 Career Recruiter, and deploying units of the Operating Forces. The program affords the opportunity of 8412 Career Recruiters to contribute their valuable skill set as needed service on combat deployment. A "broadening option" uses the valuable interpersonal and communication skills of Career Recruiters in a combat zone while the Career Recruiter benefits from leadership examples and a refresher of the environment in the current operating forces. A broadening option also meets the intent of the CMC by providing the means for career Marines with needed skills and a desire to contribute to the long war into the fight.

The core and continuity of the recruiting force responsible for obtaining the increase of 16,000 additional Marines is for all intents and purposes "fenced off" from the Commandant's intent of deploying. To their credit, the Career Recruiters performed in an exceptional manner in recruiting the Corps' increase to 202,000 in less than half the time predicted. With the increase accomplished and recruiting on a firm footing for the foreseeable future, the Marine Corps' best opportunity to rotate a much needed and very effective skill set onto the counterinsurgency battlefield is now. This paper focuses on a viable proposal to deploy the Corps' own masters of

communication and engagement in a responsible manner and commensurate with their skill set and grade.

The 8412

Per Marine Corps Order (MCO) P1200.7Z the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)

8412 job description is:

Career recruiters are superior recruiters who will serve to establish a cadre of professional recruiters with long-term assignments in key managerial billets to improve the management and effectiveness of the recruiting effort. It is possible for selected recruiters to spend most of their career in the recruiting service.²

Below is a list of the skill set that must be mastered by a recruiter in order to become an 8412:

- (a) The 8412s duty requirements are to plan, conduct, and teach recruiting activities based upon systematic recruiting components in accordance with the Volume III.
- (b) The 8412 will conduct sales presentations with prospects for enlistments as well as teaching basic selling and communication skills to other recruiters and command group members.
- (c) The 8412 is certified in PSS (Professional Selling Skills) and SBC (Selling Beyond the Close).
- (d) 8412s are the master salesman in his/her respective sub-station.
- (e) The 8412 are aware of what it takes to go from contact to contract. The career recruiter understands the recruiting cycle from the sense of civilian to Marine transformation.³

Optimally the 8412 is the Marine Corps' best and brightest in the recruiting environment. Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC) chooses 8412s not only on proven performance over a three year period, but also future potential in mind that takes many forms. First the expectation and the order states that the new 8412 must remain as a Non-Commissioned Officer In-Charge (NCOIC) of a Recruiting Sub-Station (RSS) for at least one year following selection.⁴ The Command Group (Recruiting Station (RS) Commander and senior staff) also base their nomination of a Marine's potential to become an 8412 on his/her ability to fulfill several other

duties or billets typically filled by an 8412. Those billets consist of headquarters (HQ) billets such as the Recruiter Instructor (RI), an Assistant Recruiter Instructor (ARI), and the Operations Chief. Three other billet possibilities exist for an 8412 with in a recruiting station, Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) Liaison / Chief, Program Specialist and Officer Selection Assistant (OSA). Those billet occupants usually fluctuate between an 8411 or 8412 based on an 8412's skill set, situation, overall recruiting station performance or success, and available 8412 manpower.

Unique MOS and Skill Set

Within the Marine Corps, 8412 is an exceptionally unique MOS. To compete for, then be accepted as an 8412 the Marine must; demonstrate an outstanding work ethic, display exceptional drive, excel at handling the numerous management tasks required for running a RSS (Recruiting Sub-Station), and appear as a sound and responsible Marine SNCO. The responsibilities and requirements in running an RSS are exceptionally expansive. Despite being the leader of less than seven Marines, which most squad leaders handle with great skill, the NCOIC (Non-Commissioned Officer In-Charge of an RSS) confronts Marine, community, and recruiting responsibilities continually. Those responsibilities, that occur daily, weekly, monthly, bi-annually and annually, range in a level of performance expectation of a Platoon Sergeant to a First Sergeant simultaneously. More often than not, NCOICs do not rest for holidays or a typical weekend. "There is truly no one in the RS that has more 'balls in the air' at any one time than the NCOIC."⁵ Additional skills demonstrated by the 8412 candidate are requisite leadership skills to train, guide, mentor and manage between two and six 8411 Marine Recruiters of his/her RSS. A Marine assigned to recruiting duty for a period of 36 months and graduate of Recruiter School holds the MOS of 8411 Canvassing Recruiter. A Canvassing Recruiter ranges in rank

from a senior Corporal to a mid-grade Gunnery Sergeant. Early in their career 8412s may serve in a unique leadership capacity of not being the senior Marine in an RSS by rank or years of service, however they are the senior Marine in the RSS by billet as the NCOIC of the RSS.

Leadership Caveats

In the Marine Corps, the normal flow of seniority and the establishment of leader or Marine in charge follows the rule of “the senior Marine by rank or in the case of same rank, senior date of rank, is the Marine in charge and responsible.” Unfortunately this is not always the case on recruiting duty based on several factors. Recruiting Stations receive Marines from Recruiter’s School of all MOSs of the Marine Corps and range in rank from senior Corporal to mid-grade Gunnery Sergeant. The RS Command Group must decide the best fit for those Marines for the available billet openings in several RSSs across the entire RS AO (Area of Operations) which may include multiple states. Numerous factors must come into play such as “where the Marine is from, is he/she a local that may assimilate better or is a local not best fit in this particular Marine’s case, is a specific language skill needed that he/she possesses, is ethnic background good, family situation, are there exceptional family member needs, and finally what is the rank of the Marine.”⁶ Numerous factors are covered in the best priority possible to assign an 8411 Recruiter a duty location or RSS. Thus a new 8411 senior Staff Sergeant may be reporting to an 8412 Staff Sergeant who is junior to him/her by date of rank.

In the above situation, the 8412 Staff Sergeant exercises peer leadership, what many believe as the most difficult type of leadership. Not only must the 8412 do this as a fellow Staff Sergeant, but also as one junior in time in grade to the new Staff Sergeant. Additionally the 8412 may have performed in this difficult leadership environment for the past several months with two other 8411 Staff Sergeants already in the RSS. The Staff Sergeant 8411 promoted to Gunnery

Sergeant or a brand new 8411 Canvassing Recruiter the rank of Gunnery Sergeant reporting in to a Staff Sergeant 8412 NCOIC are two much more difficult cases. Thus the leadership required for the NCOIC of an RSS can be exceptionally challenging on a daily basis for a relatively prolonged period of time.

The examples above occur more often with Gunnery Sergeant 8412s who receive a new 8411 Gunnery Sergeant senior to them or a Staff Sergeant recruiter who gets promoted to Gunny with more years of service than the 8412 Gunnery Sergeant. Exceptionally professional and self-reflecting Marines on both sides of an unfamiliar situation are required to operate in a professional manner in the best interest of the Corps and Marine in order to excel in the difficult environment of recruiting. 8412 NCOICs face myriad leadership issues from the Marine Corps spectrum alone. In those situations, both Marines must understand that the NCOIC is senior based on recruiting experience, success, leadership, and most importantly billet. That NCOIC then faces balancing personalities, family issues, and what may become hostile issues from spouses, parents, school officials and the community in which they live and work. All the above occurs most often separated from a military community of any service and possibly hours away from the NCOIC's higher command, the RS headquarters.

Marine Corps orders classify recruiting duty as "independent duty" meaning "in an isolated location from Marine units or bases and the nature of a Marine's responsibilities are performed in the civilian community and without direct supervision."⁷ Additionally, "recruiting duty is largely a self-starting, motivational type of duty."⁸ Appropriately, an 8412 Career Recruiter must be an independent self-starter capable of running a RSS as the NCOIC because his/her RSS might be a fifteen minute drive from the RS HQ or up to an eight hour drive away during good weather for travel. Marines, especially NCOICs do not have the luxury of the close

proximity or immediate personal counseling and leadership training available daily to the average squad leader, platoon sergeant or Company Gunny in the Operating Forces. “This is a significant change from the average command where most of the Marines are just down the hall or across the quad.”⁹ Distance significantly raises the difficulty faced by NCOICs.

A Cultural Divide

Marines place a high value on common culture. Forming and becoming a Marine at Boot Camp and/or Officer Candidate School (OCS) followed by similar common experiences at Marine Combat Training (MCT) / School of Infantry (SOI) or The Basic School (TBS) perpetuate a common thread for Marines past and present. In this time of the long war, over two thirds of Marine NCOs and SNCOs have at least one deployment in a combat zone. Unavoidably today, deployments to a combat zone serve as a common thread amongst Marines in both the work environment as well as during off duty gatherings.

Since the commencement in 2001 of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and followed shortly after in 2003 Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq, combat veteran Marines in progressively increasing numbers reported for recruiting duty. As evidence from the CMC’s ALMAR published in 2007, more than two thirds the Marines who reported to RSs for duty as an 8411 Recruiter had one or more deployments to a combat zone. From summer of 2007 through winter of 2010, Recruiting Station Los Angeles (RS LA) did not produce any new 8412s yet operated with eleven to eighteen 8412s during that time frame.¹⁰ All of the 8412s serving in RS LA accepted and designated as 8412 in 2007 or earlier. Of the large number of 8412s assigned and operating in RS LA, only two of eighteen 8412s had a combat deployment.

A cultural divide started surfacing based on the experience of a combat deployment for the 8411s and the timing of not having a combat deployment for 85% of the 8412s. The 8411s

comprise the preponderance of the recruiting force. The vast majority of 8411s performed multiple combat deployments while 8412s without a single combat deployment lead and managed over two thirds of them. Difficult and demanding best describe the environment for most recruiters. A Marine learns a brand a new MOS requiring constant training and guidance necessary for success in a new and foreign environment. Most experience long hours, six days a week and a great deal of failure which is not normal for them so the conditions become stressful.

Conversely a sub-section of 8412s began emerging in kind to the evolving trend. Several of the 8412s, solid leaders prior to becoming 8412s maintained that status. With a Marine's aggressive mentality they understood at that time and still today how to operate and be successful on the recruiting battlefield and no one can change that mindset or confidence level. Despite not having a combat deployment, those 8412s clearly and confidently informed their new combat veteran recruiters that, "you know, survived and were successful on the battlefield abroad, but I know how to survive and succeed on the recruiting battlefield so if you want to be successful you better listen to me." Unfortunately another group of 8412s emerged that did not have that mindset or level of confidence. Those 8412s knew the recruiting battlefield however, their confidence eroded progressively based on an 8411's increasing level of combat decorations from a Combat Action Ribbon (CAR), to a Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal with a "V" (for valor in combat), to a Navy Marine Corps Commendation Medal with a "V", to a Purple Heart, and finally to a Bronze Star with a "V." Realistically their confidence started eroding from a perceived lack of credibility amongst an office full of combat veterans. Seeming like overnight to the 8412, but in real time of about a year of PCS rotations the 8412 SNCOIC was the only Marine in the office without a combat deployment. Relayed to me in conversations with those 8412s, they felt as if they could not compare to that combat decorated Marine. Comments

such as, “what can I tell that Marine, he’s been there and done that under fire.”¹¹ Disturbing scenarios such as those appeared with Gunnery Sergeants referring to Sergeants or Staff Sergeants that had a Purple Heart and a personal award with a “V.” An 8412 Senior Gunnery Sergeant NCOIC referring to a young infantry Sergeant 8411 who had a NMCAM “V” and a Purple Heart produced the worst case scenario. The 8412 failed to hold the Sergeant accountable correctly while he trained and acclimated the Sergeant in the new and challenging environment of recruiting like he did with other recruiters before the sergeant. The 8412 felt powerless to confront the combat decorated Marine.

8412 Leadership Training

Career Recruiters exhibited a reasonably successful amount of leadership as a NCOIC with their Marines for one to two years as a in order to achieved the standards required of the MOS. Unfortunately, leadership development after that point is difficult to accomplish consistently. Since late 2007, the recruiting community began sending more Gunnery Sergeants to the Advanced Course. The increase was a reaction to the Marine Corps changing the policy of not allowing the Career Recruiter Course (8412 MOS school) to substitute for the Advanced Course PME requirement to be competitive for promotion outlined in ALMAR 391/07.¹² Additionally, 8412s receive some leadership training from the command group during RSS visits and all-hands training sessions held monthly. Command group members providing leadership training include experienced senior 8412s that serve as Recruiter Instructors, the RS Sergeant Major, Operations Officer, Executive Officer and Commanding Officer. While opportunities do present themselves to increase the leadership skills of the 8412s through training by the RS command group, the window is smaller than at first glimpse.

Captain Jeffrey Stevenson, a former RS Operations Officer and Executive Officer, addresses several of the leadership issues common to 8412s in his paper, "Changing the Eligibility Requirements for 8412s" that he prepared while attending the Expeditionary Warfare School.¹³ All-Hands training occurs once a month on recruiting duty where the entire command gets together for seven or eight hours.

During this period there is a required amount, usually three to four hours, of refresher training that is given to each recruiter and NCOIC. Then the operations section and executive officer each discuss issues for approximately two hours. This is followed by the media and public relations, logistics, and administration sections, which all need to discuss current issues with the recruiters for at least an hour. This leaves one to two hours for the Sergeant Major and the Commanding Officer to talk to the Marines and hand out monthly awards.¹⁴

Captain Stevenson further highlights some compounding issues in the following quote.

In this allotted time, the Sergeant Major cannot ensure that his Marines are being developed into good leaders. That fostering needs to come from the SNCO who is the NCOIC of the RSS, the 8412. Unfortunately the NCOICs often lack this leadership ability themselves. They lack the ability to properly lead their Marines because they possess neither the experience nor the training to do so.¹⁵

The situation highlighted above is believable by the way the Marine Corps produces some of its 8412s. Case in point, in 2007 the two most junior 8412s in RS LA reported to recruiting duty at the end of their first term. One reported as a Corporal (Sergeant Select) and the other reported as a Sergeant with three months time in grade and both 0311 infantry MOS. The highest leadership position held prior to recruiting by one Marine, Fire Team Leader and the other, Platoon Guide for a short period of time. Both meritoriously promoted to Staff Sergeant during their initial tour for excelling at recruiting. The 8412 program accepted both Marines after three years on recruiting duty and both pinned on Gunnery Sergeant at the eight years of service mark. Prior to recruiting, the exposure of those Marines to an expansive variety of leaders, leadership styles, or periods of time in lower or mi-level leadership billets proved limited

at best. After being designated 8412s, their primary duties involve being an NCOIC or above for billets that require an exceptional amount of maturity and leadership to be successful. “The Pre-eminent and primary leadership billet for an 8412 is NCOIC of a RSS”¹⁶ highlights that fact.

Situations such as those described above place an inordinate amount of leadership development training on all members of the command group to conduct in the midst of a demanding duty for all members of the command. It is not easy to develop and train those 8412s in numerous leadership styles with very little experience of good and bad leadership examples seen prior to recruiting. Expecting them to fully absorb the leadership lessons from the RS command group members in short periods of time widely spread out over months is a long shot.

Furthermore, after serving three years on recruiting duty, those two Marines face a minimum of twelve more years on recruiting duty before being eligible for retirement. To put into perspective what 8412s in general face on a daily basis, General Carl E. Mundy, 30th Commandant of the Marine Corps, stated “it’s the toughest job at any grade, in the Marine Corps.”¹⁷ More specific examples for the NCOIC include the following quote from the former Commanding Officer of RS Orange from 2004-2007 “After two to three years in billet, an NCOIC will begin to show signs of fatigue and complacency.”¹⁸ A former RS Operations Officer and Executive Officer of four years stated “most recruiters, even good 8412s peaked at three or four years on station. It is a demanding business, and it takes its toll on those who are engaged in it. Some very good ones were still effective after four or even five years, but they were rare indeed.”¹⁹ Those quotes summarize the cumulative effect of being on recruiting duty and delve into the even greater demands placed upon the NCOIC. A Pennsylvania State University research project conducted in 2002 concluded that “the average work week of a recruiter was (over 65 hours) and concluded that burnout was easily recognized.”²⁰ Some would

argue, that for three or four years following that project, recruiter and NCOIC hours increased due to the difficulty experienced in recruiting by negative messages from the media concerning increasing casualties and politics regarding the long war. This includes working six days a week and arguably the NCOICs work even longer hours daily due to early morning reporting requirements that must be submitted to the RS and late evening updates with command group members covering a variety of issues.

8412 Leadership Opportunities

As previously mentioned, other billets in the RS structure and in the Marine Corps Recruiting Command are filled by an 8412 that offer the possibility of a break from the NCOIC billet. However, for the majority of 8412s, the NCOIC is the primary billet of an 8412 for approximately half of their career. Several other factors come into play as to why an 8412 continues to serve as a NCOIC instead of filling another billet. Some RSs have a large amount of very senior 8412s that fill the senior levels of the RS billets due to experience and commensurate with grade. An RS may have a large amount of 8412s that are just about the same in seniority so it takes years to cycle the fewer headquarters 8412 billets with the more numerous NCOIC billets. Thus, a decent 8412 may find himself as a NCOIC for five or six years before an opportunity arrives for a one, two or three year break and learning experience in a headquarters billet. Last but not least are effectiveness and ability. At one point in time the 8412 was extremely successful, but due to not being moved, the 8412 is burned out. The Marine is not failing, but falls just short of getting enough focus back to be the strong contender. Further compounding the issue is a change in leadership. A new commanding officer, Sergeant Major or RI seeing the 8412's statistic score sheets may choose to keep all billets stabilized for another year. Thus the Marine endures another year of demanding responsibility without break.

The Career Recruiter Broadening Option

A broadening option takes full advantage of the incredible skill set that the 8412 Career Recruiter has mastered and benefits the 8412 personally and professionally. It further benefits the recruiting effort and notably the operating forces during the long war. The operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are largely focused on a counterinsurgency strategy. Vital to counterinsurgency operations is the ability to win over the support of the local population through communication and engagement. This endeavor is largely information based as well as being based on personal actions, communication and engagement of the Marines on the ground with the local population and officials. These actions are further enhanced by a unit's senior leadership engaging face to face with officials and religious leaders in villages, towns and cities in key leader engagements.

The New Oxford American Dictionary defines (broaden) as: "become larger at a distance: expand to encompass more people, ideas, or things."²¹ The term "broaden" in the context the Career Recruiter Broadening Option follows the logic of the second definition. This program encompasses far more than a re-greening tour. The experience had by three entities of the Marine Corps reaps immediate and future benefits for all three to be stronger and more successful. More examples of those benefits follow.

High Context vs. Low Context Society

The United States (U.S.) is a low-context society or culture. Afghanistan is a high context society or culture. Some characteristics of the two contexts follow. "High-context lives by and values long term relationships, decisions and activities focus around personal face-to-face relationships often around a central person who has authority. Low-context have more interpersonal connections of shorter duration and are task-centered whereby decisions and activities focus around what needs to be done and there is a division of responsibilities."²²

In relation to Afghanistan two elements, culture and the six month operational deployment of Marines are both tied to time, a distinct advantage to the enemy. The level of commitment to relationships: Afghans' "commitment to long-term relationships so the relationship is more important than the task to be done." Marines' "commitment to relationship is quick and the task is more important than the relationship." The flexibility of time: Afghans', "Time is open and flexible, the process is more important than the product." Marines' "time is highly organized and the product is more important than the process."²³ From the starting position in terms of working together to get activities accomplished in a cooperative manner the two cultures or societies are completely opposite in accomplishing business tasks. The situation is ideal for an 8412's experience to be utilized to operational advantage as time is limited.

The 8412 has mastered and remains a continual practitioner of communication and community engagement on an almost a daily basis. That engagement includes individuals from all levels of society, social, cultural backgrounds and walks of life. In the morning, he may attend a high school visit with one of his canvassing recruiter Marines. During the visit the 8412 may speak with several of the supportive and non-supportive teachers in the school and administrators. Many of them do not support the Marine Corps and have very negative views of the military and the long war. The 8412 must work through or overcome those misperceptions. In planning recruiting activities for the current month three weeks ago, the 8412 had the forethought to schedule a meeting with the principle at the conclusion of the school visit. After speaking with students the 8412 conducted professional business with the school's principal to tackle and resolve issues. Following the meeting, the 8412 meets to discuss the details and support for an upcoming event at lunch with a community supporter and influencer who is also a prominent and influential local businessman. After an afternoon of guiding and training his

Marines, the 8412 attended a parental consent (PC) starting at 9 PM at the house of a local church minister. The purpose of the meeting addresses several tough questions the minister and his wife have about their son wanting to join the Marine Corps instead of going to a four year university. The minister and his wife prepared mentally and sacrificed financially for their son to attend college for the past seventeen years so the 8412 must overcome those differences. In fourteen hours the 8412 covered much territory in one or a couple of communities in his area of operations (AO). He successfully dealt with multiple actors in multiple levels of society using superior communication and engagement skills to be successful in accomplishing his mission.

In Afghanistan a commander's engagement with the community in his AO requires a significant amount of face to face interaction with the local leadership. Often senior enlisted and officers must engage with influential people in the society of a town or village to make positive progress in their AO and in the accomplishment of their mission. With no specific or only basic training, they will only get so far and achieve only so much in the "high context" society during a six month tour. A typical Marine or commander will do his best with the level of training provided and with his/her experiences growing up in a low-context society to guide them in dealing with the local influencers. In American society, it is common to believe one understands what the issues or the problems are after one speaks to someone. However, in reality most Americans still do not fully understand the issues in the easier low-context society unless they have been taught techniques of how to get to the bedrock. Communication skills taught to recruiters reveal the lack of understanding common in American society, it is just characteristic of the way American culture is. The communication skills taught to recruiters enable them to dig down quickly to the bedrock when most Americans just remain at the topsoil level. As the masters of the techniques 8412s get to the bedrock of an issue quickly. Due to an expansive

background and experience in dealing with diverse cultures in their communities in which they recruit an 8412 is the ideal participant in Key Leader Engagements (KLE) in the high-context society of Afghanistan.

Exceptional communication techniques enable an 8412 to establish rapport, critical in a high context society much sooner than most Marines. Through follow on techniques of probing effectively, efficiently and to a much deeper level often overlooked by most Americans the 8412 extracts what issues face the area from both a commander's perspective and more importantly, from the local leader's and population's perspective. Once known, the 8412 aids in developing options and alternatives from both parties' points of view. Serving in the interlocutor roll the 8412 negotiates alternatives favorable to both commander and local official. The rate to accomplish the above could be at the two month mark of a deployment instead of the five month mark. Thus, with four more months remaining in the deployment to make continual progress, far more can be accomplished in the mission by that unit by having a much stronger and productive relationship with the community leaders and the population. "Force Protection and Civil Affairs are mutually supporting" as more information passes between parties and mutually beneficial relationships increase a positive benefit of increased security of all involved develops.²⁴

Civil Affairs

The tasks and actions required of Marines in Civil Affairs (CA) match up to the skill set, capabilities, and grade of a target group of 8412s to contribute their vital skills most effectively in the long war. "CA activities enhance the relationship between military forces and civil authorities in areas where military forces are present."²⁵ For at least five years, 8412s often operate as the only military organization in a civilian community serving as the ambassadors of the Marine Corps. "The MAGTF will need to coordinate with a wide variety of nonmilitary

populations, organizations and leaders.”²⁶ Again, the 8412 has mastered dealing with citizens of all cultural, societal, social, and financial statures of responsibility in the civilian community. These citizens range from school principal, immigrant parent, influential businessman, or church minister to the mayor of a city. “CA facilitate the successful management of relations between the MAGTF and the wide variety of civilians present on the modern battlefield, helping to effectively shape the civil dimension of the battlespace.”²⁷ The 8412 is a master of this because mission success of an 8412 NCOIC rests in the support he develops in the community. “CA build and use relationships with civilians and other groups to facilitate operational tasks across the full range of military operations.”²⁸ If the 8412 fails to build rapport quickly, establish a positive and productive relationship with the influencers in his community, then the 8412 will fail in his mission. The correlation of the previous task is identical with recruiting and ties into the fact that an 8412 can perform that task very quickly. An 8412 is a force multiplier to a commander in maximizing opportunities in a short operational window of six months.

The participation of the Interagency has been in the spotlight during the long war. The interagency along with numerous other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and International Organizations (IOs) have steadily increased their presence and influence on the battlefield during the long war. “Interagency coordination forges a vital link between the military and the economic, political, diplomatic, humanitarian, and informational entities of the USG, the HN, and NGOs. Effective communication and cooperation enables access to capabilities and resources not typically under MAGTF control.”²⁹ The 8412 is comfortable operating as the center of activity and coordinating numerous organizations. Inherent in this role is dealing with the various personalities involved that rarely see eye to eye. 8412s must rely on numerous organizations outside the Marine Corps in their community in order to imbed

themselves in the community to participate in events or serve as the centerpiece of an event raising awareness and attracting young people to the ideals and benefits of joining the Marine Corps. These various events occur in the community several times a year and require vast amounts of coordination to get a facility, obtain food and beverages, have medical support on sight and facilitate delivering the Marine Corps' message. For most organizations these events are expensive ventures but often times the facilities, services, items needed and time spent occur without cost due to the relationships the 8412 built in the community. The art of reading and dealing with different personalities, persuasion, knowing the needs of others, sales to accomplish needs, relationship building and maintaining result in those successes. "CA and the missions they support is complex and require the effective coordination of many agencies."³⁰ The 8412 routinely serves in that role of coordinator as depicted previous example.

Benefits to the 8412

The 8412 reaps many benefits from this program both personally and professionally. The 8412 receives a mental change of pace, a break from the daily effort and mental weight of making a recruiting mission each month. For the Marine, a physical change from recruiting in his community to being back on a main base amongst thousands of Marines for his training period occurs. A physical change to a main base also provides a mental adjustment back to the mainstay Marine Corps that re-greens or re-invigorates the spirit and motivation of the Marine. The Marine gains a secondary MOS through school training. A guarantee of a deployment to a combat zone satisfies the curiosity, the personal accomplishment needed or wanted goal of being a Marine. The 8412 achieves relatable credibility in his mind, erasing any question of not being equal caliber to all the 8411 recruiters that deployed. The 8412 experiences the common thread

amongst most of the Marines in the Corps today, a combat deployment. Most importantly, the Marine experiences several examples to serve him in the future.

Examples of leadership provided range from the detachment OIC (Officer in Charge), senior detachment and team SNCOICs to the commanders and senior enlisted Marines of the units the 8412 helped in support of their mission. In a short period of time, the 8412s leadership kit bag is filled with leadership lessons from leaders in training and in combat. He emerges a better leader as a result choosing to adopt or refer to the leadership kit bag in times of need in the future. Furthermore, as a result of the experience he is far more equipped to identify and help a Marine in need if he/she has PTSD. In turn, Marines experiencing PTSD issues feel more connected with the common thread to approach an 8412 with a combat deployment rather than an 8412 without a combat deployment as someone who can not relate or understand their issues.

Benefits to the Operating Forces

The Civil Affairs community is in need of the 8412s skill set. The 8412 not only possess the skills needed in CA, but sustains those skills as a continuing practitioner of them. CA tries to teach those engagement and communication skills however the skill level taught remains well below the level at which an 8412 operates. Furthermore, CA teaches young NCOs, in a high context society like Afghanistan the age and rank of Gunnery Sergeant is much more commensurate to dealing with local officials that regard age and rank with experience, intelligence and authority. Without proper and continued training the young Marines cannot achieve the level of success the 8412 can in performing engagement with local officials. Furthermore, the 8412 knows how to sustain the skills set long after initial training occurred, but more importantly how to further develop those skills. Additional examples of benefits to the Operating Forces and commanders follow in the "Proposed Program" section.

Benefits to the Recruiting Effort

“If recruiters do not occasionally return to the Operating Forces, they lose touch with current trends. This reduced ‘product’ knowledge offsets any gains achieved from extensive ‘area’ knowledge.”³¹ The Marine Corps experiences numerous changes in new equipment, uniforms, TTPs, schools available, and more at a very rapid rate due to the long war. Many 8412s on recruiting for seven or eight years have never seen current forms of load bearing equipment, nor have they seen an M-4 or an MRAP or worked with new radios. “8412s have been removed from the FMF for several years and have varying knowledge of what life in the fleet is currently like.”³² Those 8412s have not experienced the high tempo of operational deployments and the changes that occurred in the Corps in terms of family readiness, housing, caring for the Marines or a wounded warrior facility. These important changes and realities of today’s Corps visé a peace time Corps of just eight years ago tie into product knowledge and credibility. Many commonalities have changed quite considerably.

Some Marines must have the personal experience for something to be true. Those experiences transcend more than just the 8412 that experiences the deployment. The benefit extends to multiple 8412s that did not deploy. They see and more importantly hear from their 8412 peer what the Marines on deployment experience. They serve as a resource for their peers to tap into in dealing with Marines that have combat deployments from difficulties in training them and overcoming the mental hurdles of it. Most importantly they can relate to their Marines that have deployed, they have the credibility check in their record, possibly on their chest and most notably, in their mind mentally. The overarching strength of this program is that the 8412s without a deployment have a peer that can help them if they believe that one or more of their Marines may be suffering from PTSD. The 8412 has a fellow 8412 that can relate to the Marine

having the issues from a fellow NCOIC's viewpoint. Thus he is the keystone leader they both rely upon for supporting their needs.

Proposed Program

To make the program viable in this time of "relatively good times" for recruiting a few key elements need addressing. The typical 8412 thrives on a challenge and competition. First, by the nature of the program targeting a specific grouping of 8412s only a relatively small number of 8412s will be selected each year. Secondly, the re-greening program in the 90's did not last very long for two main reasons from a recruiter perspective and a manning issue from the manpower (M&RA) perspective.³³ The first reason, the primary option sent an 8412 to Okinawa to serve as Career Retention Specialists. It only allowed the 8412 to leave recruiting for one year, not enticing enough and the 8412 was separated from his family the entire time. The second reason, pulling too many 8412s out would cause TO shortages at too many stations. This program must provide the 8412 a credible amount of time away from the "monthly mission" of recruiting as well as give the 8412 the appropriate amount of time for training, and significant quality family time. Additionally, the civil affairs option not only recognizes their skill set as a vitally needed skill on the battlefield, but the 8412 is employed in a manner commensurate with skill and rank/grade.

Three active duty and two reserve Civil Affairs units exist in the Marine Corps: 10th Marines at Camp Lejeune, NC, 11th Marines at Camp Pendleton, CA. and III MEF on Okinawa. Additionally 3rd CAG (Civil Affairs Group) at Camp Pendleton, CA. and 4th CAG at Anacostia Naval Station, Washington D.C. are repeatedly activated to send CA Detachments (Dets) to support the long war. The vehicle is in place to make this a reality.

The design of the active duty composition supports a regimental size unit and consists of a detachment HQ, a CA Section and six CA teams that support subordinate units. The 8412 serves as a qualified Civil Affairs Noncommissioned Officer, MOS 0531, in the detachment HQ (see Appx A). The arrangement is familiar to 8412s from recruiting duty like 8412 billets on the RS staff. The detachment HQ is commanded by a major just like a RS and it maintains oversight and supervision of seven teams like an RS maintains oversight and supervision of ten to sixteen RSSs. Additionally the 8412 fulfills duties common to an 8412 on a RS staff in the form of an Assistant Recruiter Instructor. If a subordinate CA team fails to make positive progress due to engagement difficulties the 8412 retains the flexibility to assist a subordinate CA team by spending time in their AO as an expert.

In this arrangement the 8412 is recognized for the subject matter skill set he possesses in communication and engagement. Furthermore, during pre-deployment training it is incumbent upon the 8412 to train all 50 plus Marines of the detachment the critical skills of communication and engagement that he acquired through years of practice. That training will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the teams in accomplishing their mission in the field. Thus the teams shorten the timeline of establishing rapport, breaking down barriers and getting to the root of issues to move forward in a productive manner far more efficiently. At the detachment level, the 8412 serves as the CA representative, or one of the CA representatives that accompanies the Regimental Combat Team (RCT) Commander during his KLEs. The RCT Commander has a resident expert with him in not only CA, but also in communication and engagement skills. The RCT commander can choose to use his expert covertly or overtly during KLEs.

For covert use, the 8412 quietly observes all the local authorities in the room during KLEs to determine many indicators about the personalities involved. He analyzes body language

and what the leaders say to determine if they speak the truth. Additionally he can determine whether or not the leaders speaking have the authority to come through on their statements or promises. The 8412 can also determine if more information needs to come out, if something appears to be hidden by the leader or if an ulterior motive or agenda appears to be at work. Following the KLE the 8412 passes on to the RCT commander what he has determined and recommended questions for the commander to ask in the next KLE.

The RCT commander may choose to use the 8412 overtly as his introduced CA representative as well. The overt option offers the RCT commander greater flexibility to utilize the 8412 in a manner to assist the RCT commander to better understand the local leaders by utilizing his skills to drill down to the bedrock of the problem openly. This use would cause different reactions, expose far more information, and develop the situation to a fuller degree. The 8412 is knowledgeable in the broader RCT situation, mission, and commander's intent. In this role, the 8412 becomes an interlocutor or executive level facilitator to develop the situation in real time with the RCT commander. As more information comes forth the RCT commander and the 8412 gain a better understanding and draw more conclusions that lead to more probing. Then the 8412 clarifies and confirms the root issues for a mutual understanding. The 8412 then aids in developing actions agreeable to both parties in real time to get progress moving on a far more aggressive time line than would normally occur. After which the 8412 becomes that key man or focal point of activity that his is completely familiar with to coordinate the numerous local leaders, governmental, IO and NGOs to complete the plan.

Civil Affairs Detachments or unit designated to deploy to Afghanistan receive an 8412. For a seven month deployment the 8412 assignment to a unit provides a minimum of eighteen months away from recruiting. That time affords the opportunity to PCS the family, participate in

all PTP (Pre-Deployment Training Program) with the unit and attend the MOS civil affairs course. The Marine obtains a secondary MOS of 0531 from the four week Marine Corps Civil Affairs course at Quantico, Virginia. The 8412 may also attend the Army fourteen week CA course at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina however a significant increase in time away from MCRC is required. For a one year deployment the 8412 assignment to the unit requires at least 24 months away from MCRC. That affords the same opportunity for a credible break from “monthly mission”, a PCS, PTP, the CA course to get a secondary MOS and quality family time.

Counter Arguments

Some would argue that the 8412s should remain in recruiting as there are too few 8412s to draw from, which may have an adverse effect on recruiting mission accomplishment. Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC) T/O (Table of Organization) strength for 8412s is (541) and MCRC presently retains (544) 8412s.³⁴ Currently MCRC is on solid footing in reaching recruiting goals for the foreseeable future and will be affected minimally with the loss of a total of (12) 8412s in any one year. The Marine Corps maintains (48) RSs and drawing (12) 8412s only impacts 25% of the total RSs nationwide while their service in Afghanistan will save lives. The Marine Corps has a highly desirable skill in its ranks that is not in the fight forward.

The target population of 8412s to draw from is Gunnery Sergeants to junior Master Sergeants with at least five years on recruiting and do not have a combat deployment. Some believe that five or more years away from the Operational Forces is too much time away to be able to effectively train and deploy a Marine to a combat zone. Shortly following OEF and from the start of OIF, In-Active Ready Reservists and retreads returning back into the Corps with broken time have volunteered for duty in order to deploy. Many of them were away from the active forces for over five years and performed exceptionally well in Iraq and Afghanistan with

the Pre-deployment Training Program (PTP) serving them adequately. Upon the return of the 8412s to recruiting their product knowledge will have increased significantly. Plus their Marines identify them as combat veterans, a force multiplier for both parties.

With the build-up of units for Afghanistan roughly three to six 8412 will cycle out of recruiting each year to participate in the program and aid in training their replacement coming in on the back end of their tour. If the concept proves successful for the recruiting command or operationally in Afghanistan, then billets as CA Team SNCOIC's can be opened up to increase the number of 8412s cycling in for the opportunity and operational effectiveness.

Conclusion

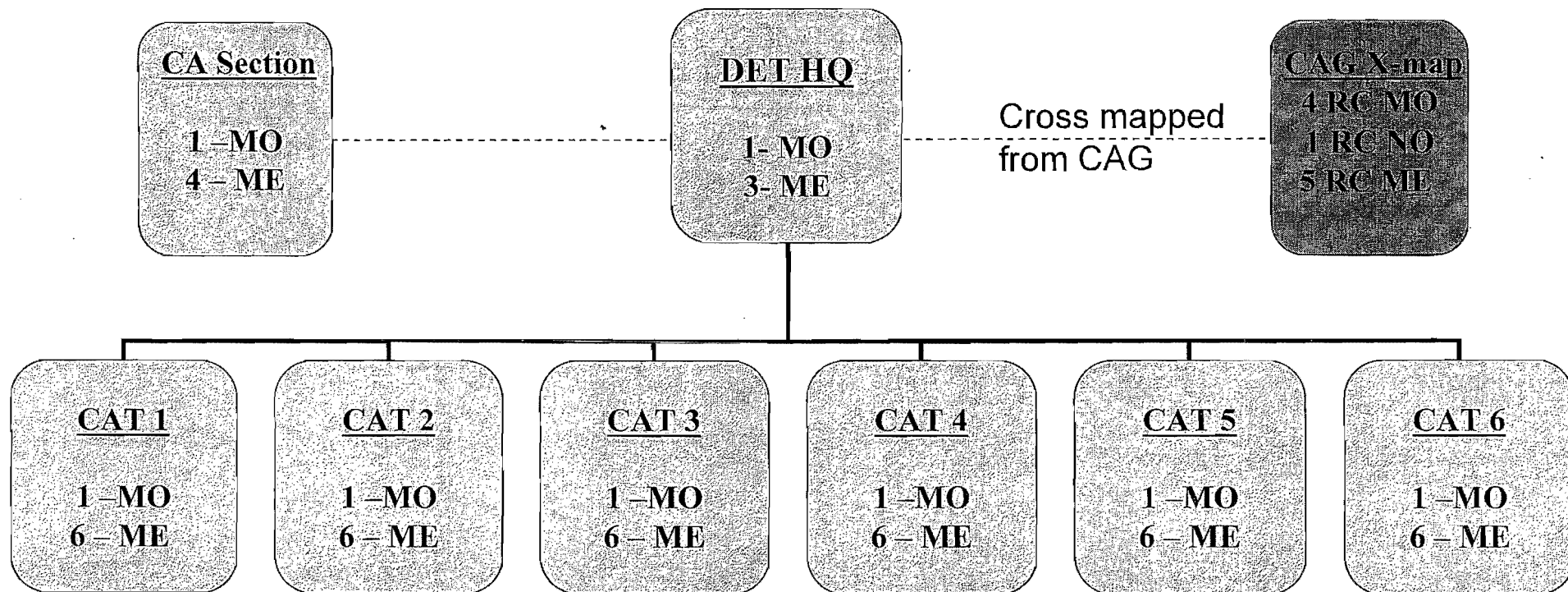
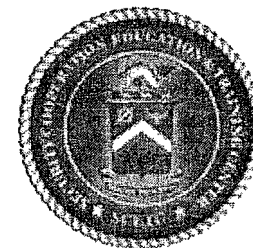
Currently the situation in the recruiting arena appears more successful than witnessed in over ten years. For over eight years U.S. and coalition forces wavered back and forth in regards to levels of success in Afghanistan. Recruiting is on a solid footing for the foreseeable future and can afford the opportunity for some of its 8412s to deploy and join the majority of today's Marines in the long war -- with the common thread of a combat deployment. With conditions set; it is time for the Marine Corps to bring all its force multipliers to bear, the experts in their field to win the long war in Afghanistan. This is a viable program to provide an 8412 Career Recruiter a re-greening tour that enhances his skills for the recruiting effort and provides the MAGTF a force multiplier at the same time. Deploy 8412s as CA Marines and the communication and engagement experts who will provide the best force multiplier to give operational commanders their best chance of success in Afghanistan.

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Artillery HQ BTRY Civil Affairs Detachment* (10th and 11th Marines)



CA Section :

1 Capt 0530
2 SSgt 0531
1 Cpl 0531
1 LCpl 3043

Det HQ :

1 Maj 0530
1 GySgt 0531
1 SSgt 0531
1 Sgt 0531

CA Team :

1 Maj 0530
1 GySgt 0531
1 SSgt 0531 or
1 Sgt 0531
4 Cpl 0531

RC Breakdown:

1 LtCol 0530 1 GySgt 0531
2 Capt 0530 2 Sgt 0531
1 Capt 4402 1 Cpl 0531
1 USN LT 2300 1 LCpl 0151

*III MEF Civil Affairs Det structured same with no Det HQ or cross mapped CAG Marines ³⁷

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